



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 10  
1200 Sixth Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98101

August 7, 2006

Reply to  
Attn Of: ETPA-088

Ref: 06-007-AFS

Ken Post  
Alaska Region Office  
P.O. Box 21628  
Juneau, AK 99802-1628

Dear Mr. Post:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for **Helicopter Access to Conduct Forest Inventory and Analysis in Wilderness** (CEQ No. 20060257) in southeast Alaska. Our review is conducted in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Section 309, independent of NEPA, specifically directs EPA to review and comment in writing on the environmental impacts associated with all major federal actions. Under our policies and procedures we evaluate the document's adequacy in meeting NEPA requirements.

The draft EIS describes five action alternatives to inventory a total of 913 plots in nineteen (19) wilderness areas on the Tongass National Forest and one wilderness study area on the Chugach National Forest over a ten-year period. The Forest Service has identified Alternative 4 as the preferred alternative. Alternative 4 would access approximately 370 plots by day hike and 540 plots by helicopter. The draft EIS concludes that there are no significant impacts to air or water quality (p. 3-68 – 3-70) and that the project will not affect the coastal zone and therefore does not require a formal Coastal Zone Management Act consistency determination by the Alaska Coastal Management Program (p. 1-13). We recommend the final EIS include a statement confirming the Alaska Department of Natural Resources concurs with your conclusion.

EPA has no objections to the proposed project and rates the EIS "Lack of Objections" (LO), consistent with EPA's policies and procedures. A copy of our rating system is enclosed for your reference. A copy of our rating and a summary of our comments will be published in the federal register.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft EIS. If you have any questions, please contact Peter Contreras at (206) 553-6708.

Sincerely,

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Christine Reichgott  
NEPA Review Unit

Enclosure